

**South Dakota Democratic Party
2004 Platform**

Agriculture and Rural Life

The South Dakota Democratic Party recognizes the importance of agriculture, not only to its farmers and ranchers but also to the economy of the state and nation and the plentiful, wholesome, and reasonably priced supply of food and fiber to the consumers of the nation and the world. It also recognizes that the fundamental core of agriculture and rural life is the family farm and ranch and rural communities.

Therefore, the South Dakota Democratic Party supports:

1. The improvements of the family agricultural production in South Dakota are important for ongoing rural economic vitality in our state. The tools needed to achieve these ends include, but are not limited to: research and development of value-added projects, development of producer-owned and operated cooperatives, programs and services that promote training and sustaining viable farm and ranch production units, and creating educational opportunities for our youth, such as 4-H, improvement of financial aid, and other programs to assist rural areas to finance and build further processing for agricultural products, rural development, renewable energy, and other new projects good for South Dakota and all its citizens.
2. Efforts to end monopolization, concentration, and control of agricultural commodities is of the utmost importance. This can be achieved by banning packer ownership of livestock, country of origin labeling on all food products, and making market competition a part of the marketing structure in this nation. South Dakota needs to aggressively pursue these issues statewide and nationally.
3. Local control of planning and zoning.
4. State support of our homegrown, renewable fuels, including ethanol, bio-diesel, and other biomass fuels.
5. Support the use of ethanol and bio-diesel fuels in state vehicles and the purchase of flexible fuel vehicles.
6. Coordination of programs so that food, agriculture and natural resource conservation policies are linked together and provide appropriate private incentives to produce, while still protecting natural resources. An economically strong agriculture is essential so that producers are financially able to properly manage natural resources for future generations using best management practices.
7. Energy in South Dakota is an issue that needs to have state focus, research, and study done now. We need to have the information and know the potential for that development. This applies to renewable fuels, wind energy, hydro generation, hydrogen fuels, and any other potential we have in South Dakota.
8. Since agriculture is still South Dakota's number one industry, the South Dakota State Fair should be financially supported by the state of South Dakota to sustain a valuable institution that is an integral part of our way of life.
9. Supports the nation wide implementation of the conservation security program and programs of similar nature that provide monetary incentives for farmers and ranchers to implement and maintain stewardship of South Dakota's natural resources.
10. We strongly support education and mentoring programs, such as the South Dakota Farmers Union Foundation, which administers efforts to educate young people on agriculture and cooperatives and mentor young producers toward success.
11. The South Dakota Democratic Party recognizes that exporting South Dakota's people and our raw agriculture products is destabilizing to our state. To this end we encourage major investments in commodity value-added industries in South Dakota. The South Dakota Democratic Party recognizes the rich cultural history that agriculture has within the state and supports all efforts towards regeneration the heritage and legacies of our family farms and ranches.

Economic Development and Tourism

The South Dakota Democratic Party advocates long-term and diversified economic development and tourism strategies that target an improved quality of life for all South Dakota citizens, and which build a first rate economy that can prosper in an increasingly competitive global economy. The Party recognizes that economic development is not only measured by the number of jobs but the quality of jobs created.

In accordance with these principles, the South Dakota Democratic Party supports:

1. Agriculture through efforts of individuals, organizations, government entities and communities in the effort of promoting new ideas and implementing existing ideas to strengthen the rural economy including:
 - a. Opportunities for family farmers and ranchers through expansion of value added agriculture with further processing in state.
 - b. Building on the value added agriculture possibilities to provide high quality jobs.
 - c. Nurturing all potential for renewable resources such as wind, ethanol and biomass.
 - d. Approaching new opportunities to explore and develop South Dakota agriculture products as potential areas of medical treatment and prevention.
 - e. The mining and timber industries and their appropriate multiple use of land
2. Energy development and recognizes the importance of public utilities by:
 - a. Urging any change in utilities policy take into account the needs of rural areas.
 - b. Enhancing the economy by working on marketable solutions for our renewable energy.
 - c. Removing barriers that impede or hinder the growth of resource industries.
 - d. Ensuring our renewable energy sources are a part of a national energy policy.
3. Continued maintenance and further development of an infrastructure promoting economic growth through:
 - a. Educational opportunities corresponding with societal needs.
 - b. Increased coverage and quality of communication technologies such as wireless, cellular and broadband service.
 - c. Active support of an expansion of the research community.
 - d. Recognition that a modern transportation system is vital.
 - e. Acknowledgement of the need to balance water usage and continue pursuing funding and development of the water projects within the state.
4. Economic and policy strategies that clearly emphasize internal development with a primary thrust toward encouraging, promoting and nurturing entrepreneurial enterprises through:
 - a. Research to include biological, medical, engineering, physical, chemical and information technology.
 - b. Expanding existing opportunities including e-commerce and distance learning.
 - c. Encouraging local communities in assisting with entrepreneurial opportunities.
 - d. Supporting long-term and diversified economic development on South Dakota's Indian reservations.
 - e. Securing venture or seed capital from public and private sources to foster growth.
5. Expanded development of the South Dakota tourism industry through:
 - a. Generous funding for the promotion of South Dakota as a quality vacation destination.
 - b. Increased awareness of historical sites and cultural events, recreational activities and family attractions.
 - c. Further development of recreational trails on private, state and federal lands.
 - d. Involving more directly the Native American community in the tourist industry.
 - e. Expanding the role of the visitor centers to better focus on the hospitable quality of the people of South Dakota.

Education

The South Dakota Democratic Party supports public education and strongly encourages all communities to make education a priority. A major responsibility of our State government is to establish and maintain a general and uniform system of public education, which is equitable, fair and adequate. Therefore, the South Dakota Democratic Party supports and encourages:

1. A formula that adequately and equitably funds public education and stabilizes pre K-12 school finance.
2. Increased state funding for post secondary education, including universities, tribal colleges and technical institutes.
3. Increasing salaries for all education personnel.
4. Continued state funding of academic scholarships and other incentives for post secondary students, including part time and non-traditional students.
5. A well-rounded pre K-12 curriculum that follows the state content standards and includes the fine arts, world languages, career and technical education, physical education and technology education.
6. A full complement of support services for students utilizing certified personnel.
7. School accreditation, teacher certification and professional development, including training and access to technology.
8. Certified teachers in every classroom.
9. Collaboration with educators, parents, community members, businesses and government agencies to promote community involvement and to secure additional funding for our schools.
10. Enrollment in courses or programs of study to fulfill the work requirements for welfare recipients.
11. A safe and drug-free learning environment in all schools.
12. Strong and effective literacy programs for life-long learners.
13. State funding based on actual costs, not averages, for servicing those with disabilities and special education needs.
14. The development and funding of programs that identify and assist at-risk students at an early age.
15. The development and funding of early childhood education programs that are available for all children
16. Educationally appropriate class sizes for all curricular areas in our schools.
17. Effective programs to attract and retain teachers.
18. The recognition of teachers who pursue the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification by increasing the longevity of the stipend to match the lifetime of the certificate.

Health Care

The South Dakota Democratic Party believes that equal access to effective, affordable, and high quality health care is the right of all citizens.

1. We support affordable health care coverage for every South Dakotan.
2. We support a meaningful Patient's Bill of Rights.
3. We support the monitoring and regulating of health insurance and managed care companies and self-insured organizations in order to protect consumers and assure quality health care services for all citizens.
4. We applaud the establishment of a state pool for the high risk/medically uninsurable and support continued expansion to meet needs.
5. We support extending insurance coverage to include mental health care on an equal basis with physical health care
6. We support aggressive pursuit of remedies for reducing prescription drug pricing.

7. We support a strong and viable public health system in order to promote and support community wellness and prevention efforts towards a healthy South Dakota.
8. We support higher education in South Dakota for health care professionals to ensure the highest quality of healthcare services and encourage health professional graduates to practice in rural settings. Admission preference should go to S.D. residents.
9. We support that monies allocated to or generated from the health care trust fund be utilized for health care purposes, including long-term care.
10. We support increased funding for veteran's health care services.

Human Rights

The South Dakota Democratic Party recognizes that we are a global and multicultural community. We recognize that each individual brings a special gift to the community. We believe in the principles of dignity, self-determination, justice and a decent quality of life.

In order to promote a more civil society, we support the following:

1. A commitment to meeting every individual's basic human needs and to promote tolerance and respect for diverse cultures, lifestyles, spirituality and viewpoints.
2. The right to live, work and worship within a community without fear of discrimination.
3. The reform of the Patriot Act.
4. Elimination of racial profiling.
5. The separation of church and state.
6. The necessity for South Dakota medical providers receiving public funds to render impartial and dignified treatment without regard to race, sexual orientation, gender, age, economic status, religion or marital status. Including:
 - a. Information regarding emergency contraception.
 - b. Full healthcare regardless of sexual orientation / gender assignment.
 - c. Treating HIV / AIDS as a health issue, not a legal issue.
7. Adequate funding of domestic violence shelters, sexual assault centers and visitation centers.
8. Quality, affordable childcare that meets health and safety standards.
9. Reasonable alternatives to incarceration for those offenders who would benefit from programs that promote rehabilitation and behavioral change commensurate with public safety, including restoration of educational opportunities.
10. Safety of juvenile offenders within the State of South Dakota including:
 - a. The fundamental purpose of our juvenile corrections system must be reform, not punishment.
 - b. Mandated accreditation of the Juvenile Department of Corrections system.
 - c. Creation of an ombudsman, guaranteed to be independent of political or bureaucratic pressure, fully qualified and empowered to act on behalf of young people.
 - d. Separation by sight and sound of juveniles from adult detainees.
 - e. A Bill of Rights for incarcerated youth and the parents and guardians of all children under jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections, affording due process of law.
11. The Americans with Disabilities Act and appropriate programs to ensure the dignity of persons with disabilities.
12. Appropriate staffing and funding for the South Dakota Human Rights Commission.

Labor and Employment

The South Dakota Democratic Party is committed to improving the lives of South Dakota's workers and their families. Therefore, the South Dakota Democratic Party:

1. Supports, and will work towards securing a living wage, including raising the minimum wage for South Dakota.

2. Supports the protection and expansion of workers' rights and benefits, such as breaks, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, healthy and safe work places, and health care. The party also supports eliminating discrimination in the workplaces on the basis of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or union affiliation.
3. Supports an end to the so-called "Right to Work" Amendment in the South Dakota Constitution and encourages education on what "Right To Work" means.
4. Supports the rights of workers to participate in all aspects of government in South Dakota without employer retribution.
5. Opposes any action that would undermine the ability of labor unions to educate their members and express political viewpoints.
6. Supports continued efforts towards equal pay for equal work for all workers in the state of South Dakota.
7. Supports the use of state funds, grants, and loans to create jobs that pay a living wage, in an effort to keep the youth of South Dakota in the state.
8. Supports giving all South Dakota employees Equal Protection under the state bargaining statute and the right to binding arbitration.
9. Believes non-union members of a bargaining unit, who benefit from union representation, should pay for the cost of their representation.
10. Supports the abolition of "at-will" work laws.
11. Supports the rights of employees to use time off necessary to care for their illness or that of family members without sacrificing vacation time earned or facing retribution.
12. Supports the raise in the unemployment compensation rate by 50 percent plus the annual rate of inflation going back to last time it was increased.

Native American Issues

We recognize the treaty status of the Native Americans in South Dakota as sovereign nations. We also recognize the unique relationship tribes have with the Federal Government. In addition, we recognize the need to foster a positive working relationship between the tribes, the South Dakota Democratic Party, the state and the local governments. We, the Democratic Party:

1. Recognize, respect, honor, and promote the positive values that have sustained the many Native American cultures.
2. Promote awareness of the relationship between the State of South Dakota and the sovereign nations of the Native Americans.
3. Aggressively support the creative pursuit of business and economic opportunities for Native Americans in South Dakota.
4. Support federal, state, tribal and local coordination and cooperation in the protection of the environment and natural resources.
5. Support and encourage state cooperation to improve the living conditions of Native Americans through the development of infrastructure and housing.
6. Support and encourage state cooperation to improve the quality of life, health care services and delivery, and progressive educational opportunities for Native Americans.
7. Support, encourage, and promote the equal participation of Native Americans at all levels of the South Dakota Democratic Party and the political process.
8. Recognize the right of Native American children to grow up in a Native American setting and the interests of tribes in preserving that right as mandated by the Indian Child Welfare Act.

Natural Resources

The South Dakota Democratic Party recognizes the fact that protection of our water, air, land, and other natural resources is both essential and beneficial to positive economic development. Natural resources must be managed and protected in a way that enhances our quality of life and strengthens agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and South Dakota's other vital industries. South Dakota's unique lifestyle depends upon the protection of our environment and on responsible economic

development. Management and regulatory policies must recognize the need to promote sound conservation practices geared toward long term sustainability of our natural resources. Our resources belong not to corporate polluters, but to future generations.

1. We support stricter oversight and enforcement of our state and federal Environmental laws. Those responsible for polluting and/or degrading the quality of South Dakota land, air, and water, should be held responsible for their actions. When necessary, prompt clean-up should be conducted at the expense of the polluters.
2. We encourage wise and effective management of forest resources with emphasis on thinning to protect populated areas. We further encourage reduction of wildland fire hazards by removal of dense brush and small diameter trees regardless of marketability of such material.
3. We support policies that provide enhanced outdoor recreational opportunities without damaging South Dakota's natural resources.
4. We support adequate funding to maintain and improve South Dakota's public assets, such as lakes, parks, rivers, wetlands, and forests.
5. We recognize South Dakota's rich heritage of hunting and fishing. We encourage adequate funding and access to public hunting and fishing areas to protect this tradition for future generations.
6. We support continuing development and funding of municipal and rural water systems such as but not limited to Mid-Dakota, Lewis and Clark, Bon Homme-Yankton, and Mni-Wiconi.
7. In order to minimize pollution caused by fossil fuel generation of electricity and to develop South Dakota's natural resources, we encourage efforts to utilize wind, biomass, solar, hydropower, ethanol, bio-diesel, hydrogen, geothermal steam, and other renewable energy.
8. We support utilizing the services of the Conservation Districts for the development of each community's natural resources.
9. We encourage increased public education regarding the numerous benefits of conservation and recycling. We strongly support the practices of conservation on state lands, in state facilities, in local communities, and encourage initiatives to promote improved efficiency and fuel economy for state-owned vehicles.

Senior Issues

The South Dakota Democratic Party recognizes the tremendous social and economic contributions that senior citizens make to our society and understands the necessity of ensuring a quality of life for all senior citizens.

We, the South Dakota Democratic Party:

1. Encourage the state of South Dakota to recognize and appreciate the skills, leadership and expertise of our senior citizens and continue to formulate programs to make use of these resources
2. Encourage the state to fund and develop a continuum of progress and services for senior living, including family care, home health care, assisted living, and nursing homes.
3. Support access to affordable prescription drugs, re-importation of prescription drugs from Canada and other foreign countries, and allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices as the Veterans Administration does.
4. Support at an early age increased general education and awareness about the need and benefits of long-term care coverage.
5. Support access to telecommunications services for all senior citizens at reasonable and affordable rates.
6. Oppose all surcharges and add-ons beyond basic bill.
7. Oppose deregulation of electric utilities in South Dakota.
8. Support whatever means is necessary to eliminate spam on the Internet consistent with Freedom of Information.
9. Support public policy that ensures the availability of affordable, reliable, and stable utility rates.

State and Local Revenue

The South Dakota Democratic Party urges the State Legislature and the Executive Branch to improve the fairness of our antiquated tax structure. Our tax system should:

1. Be based on a tax structure which taxes all income levels fairly.
2. Adequately fund public education.
3. Provide for proper maintenance of the states and local infrastructure and government operations.
4. Address the continuing serious flaws in our current system of taxing property.
5. Be competitive with surrounding states.
6. Remove the sales tax on food.
7. Exempt local governments from the contractors excise tax.
8. Include rules on tax increment financing which prohibit property tax decisions by one local jurisdiction from adversely impacting another jurisdiction.

Agriculture Resolution

WHEREAS, current trade policies run the risk of turning the United States economy from a producer to a consumer economy and endanger the success of new innovations and industries such as ethanol and soy diesel,

WHEREAS, the discovery of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in Canadian cattle is a threat to the consumers of the United States,

WHEREAS, with many of the “free trade” agreements, United States agriculture is shortchanged by opening our markets to other countries and putting us at a disadvantage in foreign markets,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that we urge the President, the United States Congress and our U.S. trade representatives to work with other nations toward fair trade policies for the American producers.

Cost of Living Adjustment Resolution**South Dakota Retirement System**

WHEREAS, the South Dakota Retirement system is considering legislation to lower the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for retirees,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Dakota Democratic Party opposes lowering the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

Education Resolution

WHEREAS, public education is a high priority for the citizens of South Dakota; and

WHEREAS, the establishment and maintenance of a general and uniform system of public education is a responsibility of the Legislature; and

WHEREAS, limited resources are currently available for public education and any division of public monies to fund services for non-public schools will further erode our commitment to public education;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Democratic Party opposes Constitutional Amendment B (2004 Legislative Session –HJR 1003) on the November 2004 Ballot, which expands the services to non public schools and diverts public money from local school districts.

Ellsworth Air Force Base Resolution

WHEREAS, Ellsworth Air Force Base contributes \$260 million annually to the economy of South Dakota on a \$2.2 billion infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the mission of Ellsworth Air Force Base has been reduced to one wing, when in the past it has supported four wings; and

WHEREAS, Ellsworth Air Force Base has the capabilities of having a realigned mission, and the airspace to support the realignment,
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the South Dakota Democratic Party supports Ellsworth Air Force Base as an economic entity and its continuing and expanding mission in the defense of our country.

Health Care Resolution

Resolution #1

WHEREAS, all patients should be guaranteed the right to select the doctor of their choice; and
WHEREAS, all patients should be allowed to seek treatment from a specialist without being first referred to the specialist; and
WHEREAS, it is vital that all individuals receive emergency care at the closest facility; and
WHEREAS, all patients should have the right to visit doctors outside their coverage network at a minimal additional cost; and
WHEREAS, all patients should have the right to access our courts to hold their HMO responsible for denial of services;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Dakota Democratic Party supports federal and state legislation that will advance these goals and guarantee these rights.

Health Care Resolution

Resolution #2

WHEREAS, continued protection of quality health care is a matter of concern to all South Dakotans; and
WHEREAS, the health care system is national in scope and crosses all state boundaries; and
WHEREAS, congressional action is necessary to preserve, protect and enhance a nationwide system of quality health care;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Dakota Democratic Party supports federal legislation which provides quality health care coverage for all Americans.

Health Care Resolution

Resolution #3

WHEREAS, we recognize that the South Dakota population is aging as baby boomers near retirement; and
WHEREAS, Senior Citizens and retirees deserve the opportunity to maintain their optimal quality of life; and
WHEREAS, approximately 70% of nursing home patients are Medicaid recipients; and
WHEREAS, South Dakota nursing homes are losing \$24.2 million annually due to dwindling Medicaid reimbursements; and
WHEREAS, long-term health care is in a state of crisis causing nursing homes to possibly have to downgrade their care or close their doors.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Dakota Democratic Party supports action on all levels that encourages advanced planning and funding for a broad continuum of long-term care services, especially the use of Intergovernmental Transfer Funds (IGT Funds)/Healthcare Trust Fund earnings for the care of our elderly and disabled nursing home residents.

Health Care Resolution

Resolution #4

Deductibility of Health Care Insurance Costs

WHEREAS, health care insurance costs are a burdensome but necessary expense for South Dakota families; and
WHEREAS, businesses enjoy the deductibility of health insurance expense for their employees as a cost of doing business;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Democratic Party supports federal legislation to allow full tax deductibility of health insurance costs, including long-term care, for families and individuals.

Health Care Resolution

Resolution #5

Veteran's Healthcare

WHEREAS, we recognize the sacrifices that South Dakota veterans and their families have contributed in maintaining our rights and freedoms; and

WHEREAS, veterans of the armed services performed their duties admirably; and

WHEREAS, our veterans receive healthcare benefits that were guaranteed to them for their services; and

WHEREAS, this care is available through hospitals and clinics administered by the Veteran's Administration; and

WHEREAS, unacceptable waiting periods are encountered by veterans seeking to access their health care; and

WHEREAS, veterans quality of life and personal dignity are jeopardized by this lack of access;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Democratic Party urges the United States Congress to increase funding for the Veteran's Administration and take whatever other steps are necessary to assure timely treatment for American veterans.

Homestake Mine Resolution

WHEREAS, the SD Democratic Party advocates long term and diversified economic development, and the advancement of scientific research; and

WHEREAS, the state of South Dakota has invested time and resources into the conversion of the Homestake Mine into an underground scientific laboratory; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has also allocated funding to the Homestake Project; and

WHEREAS, the SD Democratic Party recognizes the importance of the Homestake Mine as a pivotal research and economic resource for our state;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the SD Democratic Party urges the National Science Foundation to declare the Homestake Underground Lab as their official underground laboratory

Iraq War Resolution

WHEREAS, South Dakotans have a long and distinguished history of answering their country's call to duty in large numbers relative to our state's population;

WHEREAS, thousands of South Dakotans have served or are serving their country courageously and honorably in Iraq;

WHEREAS, the Bush Administration's failure to assemble a United Nations coalition in Iraq has resulted in the military burden being born disproportionately by U.S. troops and reconstruction efforts being funded almost exclusively by American taxpayers;

WHEREAS, rather than directly asking for more troops and resources from the international community – particularly in light of the unanimous vote in favor of a Security Council resolution on the transfer of sovereignty to Iraq – the Bush Administration continues to ask for more from our troops and their families and from America's taxpayers;

WHEREAS, respect for freedom of speech and tolerance of differing points of view are sacred tenets of American democracy and important goals of U.S. policy in Iraq;

WHEREAS, the Bush Administration continues to imply that Americans who raise questions about its Iraq policy are unpatriotic;

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the South Dakota Democratic Party

- express its profound appreciation for the sacrifices made by South Dakotans who are serving or have served so honorably in Iraq, and for their families;

- notes with deep sadness the ultimate sacrifice made by at least eight South Dakotans and the wounding of a number of others;
- calls on the Bush Administration to build a true international coalition for reconstruction of Iraq, a coalition that will hasten the stabilization and security of Iraq, and will enable the earliest feasible exit of US Troops;
- urges the Bush Administration to stop using language that impugns the patriotism of Americans who raise questions or disagree with aspects of its policies on Iraq; and
- underscores the need for the President to present to Congress and the American people a realistic plan for stabilizing Iraq, a realistic estimate of the costs of that plan (including the costs of military and reconstruction efforts), and an honest accounting of how to pay these costs.

Labor and Employment Resolution

Resolution #1

WHEREAS, employees have been expected to work when their lives have been endangered due to extraordinary conditions created by natural disasters and acts of terror

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Dakota Democratic Party supports that any non-emergency response employee may refuse to work if his/her life is threatened due to these extraordinary conditions without fear of retribution.

Labor and Employment Resolution

Resolution #2

WHEREAS, over 2 million jobs in the United States have been lost in the last four years; and

WHEREAS, American job growth is essential for local, state and the national economy; and

WHEREAS, American workers, products and services are second to none;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the South Dakota Democratic Party supports American jobs for American workers; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the South Dakota Democratic Party opposes job outsourcing.

Missouri River Sedimentation Resolution

WHEREAS, the Missouri River main stem dams, Gavins Point, Fort Randall, Big Bend, Oahe and Garrison Dams were constructed by the federal government under the Flood Control Act of 1944, also know as the Pick Sloan Plan, and Fort Peck Dam was constructed by the federal government as a WPA project, and improved under the Flood Control Act of 1944, and;

WHEREAS, said dams provide major benefits to the citizens of South Dakota and many other states, with said benefits including flood control, low cost hydro-power, domestic and irrigation water supplies, stored water for navigation usages, and major recreation benefits, and;

WHEREAS, sediment has entered and continues to enter the reservoirs created by these dams, with said sediment being deposited within the waters of the reservoirs, and;

WHEREAS, these sediment deposits are having a serious negative effect upon the benefits provided by these dams and reservoirs, with damages to agriculture, water supplies, hydro-power production, housing and business structures, roads, and recreation facilities, and;

WHEREAS, the federal government, acting through the managing agency, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, has not taken any steps to correct the sediment problem, with the exception of purchasing affected properties, or of paying for repairs to damaged facilities, and;

WHEREAS, unless the sediment problem is properly addressed, with the sediment being controlled and removed, the reservoirs will ultimately fill with sediment and many of the benefits will be lost:

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Democratic Party of South Dakota hereby adopts the position of supporting fully efforts to reduce the amount of sediment entering the reservoirs, and fully supports the removal of sediment that has, or will, enter the reservoirs, and;

FURTHER, the Democratic Party of South Dakota hereby requests the federal government immediately take all necessary steps to fund and implement a plan to accomplish the control and removal of sediment in order to preserve and enhance the many benefits provided to the citizens of South Dakota, all other affected states, and the citizens of the United States of America.

Native American Resolution

WHEREAS, the leadership of the South Dakota Republican Party made allegations falsely stating, after losing the 2002 election, that the South Dakota Democratic Party committed widespread voter fraud to increase the voter turnout among Native American voters; and,

WHEREAS, the Republican state attorney general conducted investigations of these damaging allegations and admitted that they had no basis in fact; and,

WHEREAS, the Republican-controlled South Dakota Legislature then reenacted the requirement to notarize absentee ballot requests, which hinders voter access to the election process; and,

WHEREAS, the South Dakota Democratic Party supports reauthorization of Section 5 of the Voters Rights Act of 1965 (SEC. 5. Whenever a State or political subdivision with respect to which the prohibitions set forth in section 4(a) are in effect shall enact or seek to administer any voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting different from that in force or effect on November 1, 1964, such State or subdivision may institute an action in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia for a declaratory judgment that such qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure does not have the purpose and will not have the effect of denying or abridging the right to vote on account of race or color, and unless and until the court enters such judgment no person shall be denied the right to vote for failure to comply with such qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure: Provided, that such qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure may be enforced without such proceeding if the qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure has been submitted by the chief legal officer or other appropriate official of such State or subdivision to the Attorney General and the Attorney General has not interposed an objection within sixty days after such submission, except that neither the Attorney General's failure to object nor a declaratory judgment entered under this section shall bar a subsequent action to enjoin enforcement of such qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure. Any action under this section shall be heard and determined by a court of three judges in accordance with the provisions of section 2284 of title 28 of the United States Code and any appeal shall lie to the Supreme Court.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Democratic Party declares the actions of the South Dakota Republican caucus and the Republican Governor's Office as unacceptable because they are intended to undermine the constitutional rights of Native American populations to participate in free elections and the South Dakota Democratic Party calls on the Governor, the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the Legislature to repeal punitive restrictions named in this resolution and to work productively to make it as easy as possible for all South Dakotans to participate in the election process.

Right to Vote Resolution

WHEREAS, the right to vote is fundamental to a democratic society; and,

WHEREAS, recent changes in South Dakota election laws make it more difficult to exercise the right to vote; especially for senior citizens;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Dakota Democratic Party supports legislation to simplify the voting process.

Senior Issues Resolution

Resolution #1

WHEREAS, many South Dakota seniors depend on Medicare for health insurance coverage; and

WHEREAS, many health care providers are unable to make Medicare services available for the amount of reimbursement currently available for Medicare; and

WHEREAS, the current rates of Medicare reimbursement are grossly inadequate to ensure quality medical care for South Dakota seniors;

WHEREAS the 2004 Medicare bill did increase Medicare reimbursement to rural States;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Dakota Democratic Party urges the U.S. Congress to continue to enact reasonable and adequate Medicare reimbursement rates.

Senior Issues Resolutions

Resolution #2

WHEREAS, lower prescription drug costs are greatly needed for all seniors and all South Dakotans;

WHEREAS the 2004 Medicare Bill does NOT lower prescription drug costs for most South Dakota seniors,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the South Dakota Democratic Party supports elimination of prescription drug discriminatory pricing practices and a shortening of prescription drug patent life to lower prescription drug costs.

Wilderness Resolution

WHEREAS, the U.S. Forest has inventoried 71,000 acres of Forest Service roadless lands in South Dakota that meet the stringent criteria for potential wilderness designation; and

WHEREAS, two areas have been recommended for wilderness designation by the most recent Record of Decision released by the U.S. Forest Service, Indian Creek (23,890 acres) and Red Shirt (13,750 acres); and

WHEREAS, a Citizen's Proposal for Wilderness in South Dakota has included the two above areas, though with higher acreages and more logical boundaries, and identified two additional areas suitable for inclusion in the wilderness designation, the Cheyenne River area (8,555 acres) and First Black Canyon area (10,218 acres); and

WHEREAS, these four areas, located in the Buffalo Gap National Grassland in southwestern South Dakota, total 71,381 acres and represent less than 0.1% of the state's acreage and approximately 12% of the total Buffalo Gap National Grasslands; and,

WHEREAS, these unique roadless areas, with their special landscapes, can only be permanently protected by Congressional designation as wilderness areas; and,

WHEREAS, these areas would be the first nationally designated wilderness areas on our National Grasslands; and,

WHEREAS, wilderness designation does not affect the public's access to and use of these public lands for non-mechanized recreation and education; and,

WHEREAS, wilderness designation does allow grazing and maintenance of facilities to support grazing; and,

WHEREAS, this Citizens Proposal for Wilderness in South Dakota is supported by many prominent South Dakota Democratic faithful;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THAT the South Dakota Democratic Party supports wilderness designation for the four above suggested areas, and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor of South Dakota, the South Dakota Congressional Delegation, and any other interested party.